764 period is sometimes reduced to three days, but a week conforms more to custom, as is shown by the Ségou chronicle cited earlier.

All this takes place "at the door of the dead," at the blon'-da, as the natives call it, that is, at the very place where the elder was wont to sit and where offerings were made to the ancestors. It is believed that the soul of the departed is there and will be gratified amidst this abundance honoring him and testifying to his kindness and also to his power. In the minds of the Bambara these repasts of communion form a very strong bond among those who partake of them. The act of eating consecrated food together is a kind of sacrament which binds the participants to mutual aid. A traitor is doomed to be cursed by the manes.

Magic, of course, can free a person from these bonds and even enable him to profit from these funeral gatherings to further the most nefarious schemes, but that does not alter the concepts on which the dyansa and the sanga-fo are based.

765 783 [824] (d) Mourning. The purification of the hut of the deceased takes place on the eighth day. Women pulverize tree bark -- from the cailcedra (2) especially -- put it in water,

2. Khaya senegalensis.

and sprinkle this liquid about the hut which they then sweep.

They assemble with native brooms, sing, and do a kind of dance step; they collect the dirt and throw it away at a crossroads outside the village (3). The hut may then be re-

3. Preferably at the main crossroads (da-n-kun'-ba-la).

occupied. [172]

765 514 During the eight days following the burial, the daughters of the fa live together in strict seclusion. They spend their days in the blon', where they spin cotton and take their meals. To take care of their natural needs, they go out only in a body;

765 twice a day, morning and evening, they go in procession, their [514] heads covered with caps made of white cloth. They spend the nights together, in a single hut if possible.

The wives of the deceased go out only when it is absolutely necessary during the first moon after the death; they [292] are dressed in white and wear a kind of white hood on their heads and sandals made of goatskin on their feet. At the end of the moon, at night and separately, they go to a sort of puri- [783] fication rite that takes place at the crossroads outside the village.

Up to the fortieth day there is a very gradual return to ordinary life. Then, and only then, the successor to the deceased is finally recognized and installed, as is shown in the chronicle of Ségou.

801 In closing, let us note how every ritual sequence rests 805 on periods of time whose real meaning must be sought in magic. The astral religion of the Semites in fact taught that on the third, seventh, and fortieth day after death the moon acts more powerful to destroy the body (1). Apparently some

1. See the meeting of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres of August 9, 1918, paper by Franz Cumont, "La commémoration des morts et l'astrologie [The Commemoration of the Dead and Astrology]," Journal Officiel (1918), p. 7224.

such beliefs must account for the Bambara rites planned precisely according to these numbers. This seems all the more likely since the Sudanese commonly believe that the fortieth day marks the separation of the flesh from the bones of buried corpses.

881 304 292 among the Bambara, while the Marka use cloth dyed indigo-blue.

a high cap with strings extending from the earlaps. They can only leave the place where they are assembled, even for the needs of nature, under the leadership of the sema-tye and shaking a stick of wood to which are attached bits of broken pottery. This rattle is called n-koso-m-bara.

881 304 They pass the time plaiting mats, gossiping, laughing, and pestering passers-by. On market days they are permitted to block the paths leading to the village and to collect a tithe from the traders.

The officials of the sects often visit them in their retreat.

Girls. The blacksmiths' wives who are to remove part of the clitoris await the girls outside the village under the trees. Some matrons assist them. Each child in turn runs up to the operator and squeezes herself between [244] the legs of the matron who exposes the clitoris. The excised clitoris is laid [189] in a little woven basket and is carefully preserved for making talismans.

The completion of the operation is announced in the same way as for the boys, and the Komo-tigi likewise puts the ashes from nyanka leaves on the familial kara.

The girl then rejoins her companions in the hut reserved for them in each section of the settlement. There they are under the surveillance of an old woman, the sema-moso, who knows how to take care of them and who sees to it that they behave properly. They are very well fed.

881 Wrapped in skirts, they lean on canes of dried millet stalks when they walk and shake a gourd pierced with holes and [514] filled with pebbles. They go out only for the needs of nature and then all in a body. They warn the passers-by by shaking their rattles and singing improvised songs. As they near paths outside the village, they intone a refrain.

Soli da woro (1). The seclusion of the soli-ma ceases

1. Literally, "sixth day of the soli."

343 which are dried. Then it is reassembled without sealing the pieces
251 together, and as the level of the provisions goes down, the unnecessary sections are taken off. The kitchens are situated to the west of the rooms.

342 Arrangement of the huts in a concession. The chief's hut is always to the east, for he must see the sun rise. His hut is often
361 quadrangular and has several rooms. The women's huts are generally round; each has its kitchen situated to the west and closed by a separate lock. Private shower rooms are reserved for husbands and
[514] wives. Privy cabinets with two holes, one for urine and one for stool, are stopped up and condemned when they are full.

312 Finally, the well is sunk in the middle of the court or else in the immediate proximity of the concession. Water is drawn directly with a calabash fixed to a long rope.

342 Sometimes individual huts are constructed on piles for protection against mosquitoes at night; the only opening is a trap door in the floor by which the hut is entered.

g. Tombs

764 An old custom had the family heads buried in their huts. The Fama were buried in the courts of their fortified palaces, to the northwest. Babies were buried near their mothers' huts, for their return was awaited. At the present time the Bambara are buried in cemeteries following Moslem or animist custom.

[767] [103] The brotherhood priests dig the graves; tombs may be individual or collective. Monteil (Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta]) describes a chief's tomb: the vault has the form of a parallelepiped; the lower base is one meter wide and two long, the upper base three wide and two long, and a vertical partition of 1. 50 meters forms a right angle with the bases.

In Ouassoulou the custom was to dig a common tomb of several chambers for the whole family. A square entrance about two meters high and two wide led into a narrow corridor that opened on a first chamber reserved for children; another corridor connected the first chamber with a second, larger one reserved for women and for adult males; from this a third corridor led to a last chamber, a smaller one for heads of the family. An oil lamp was placed at the

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door, clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly
776 reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls, turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village; they flutter in the b'lon, or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth, hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

[415] 1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

881 run, as they have demonstrated under the karité tree), is the part of whole festival which is most reminiscent of a child, and of the function of the circumcision. It is the second birth, and just as the infant appears in public for the first time on the back of her mother, so she again enters the civil and religious life on the back of her mother or of the woman who takes her place.

The excised girls do very little in their huts, and like the boys, they yawn, sleep, and eat. However, they spin a little cotton and very often sing in a low voice while they practice gracefully shaking a gourd the size of a fist, pierced with little holes and filled with small pebbles. They lead a very easy life, and one might think they were happy, but a toothless old woman who is always grumbling watches over them. This is a great nuisance! It is impossible to move, impossible to wiggle a toe; one must have permission for everything, and it is never granted gracefully. The wants of nature must be satisfied in a group and at stated hours. . . . When the girls go through the village, they lean, in accordance with custom, on a millet stalk at the end of which is hung the perforated gourd in which little pebbles rattle. /182/

881 533 On the way out as they go into the bush, they sing to the gnâma to protect themselves from them:

Bo n'yé, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Go away from me, gnâma, ô gnâma,
Dankouri ba la,
Of the great corner of land (1),

1. The corner of land formed by two paths that cross, the place where the gnâma dwell. /The slight discrepancy between the translations of the song given here and in Chapter 1, Section 3, is present in the original French. Ed./

585 their respects. It is chiefly the d'lo, or millet beer, that attracts them, but under these circumstances the Bambara forget that they are beggars always holding out their hands. Although the visitors eat, drink, and get drunk, they pay for at least a part of what they consume.

585 431 Through the intermediary of the fourouboloma tigi, each guest and visitor, man or woman, gives the couple a fourouboloma fara, or wedding present, in kind or in money. They know, after all, that this is a means -- and the best-- by which they can empty a jug of d'lo, then a second, and finally several.

585 I know nothing more taxing than a Bambara wedding, which lasts two, three days, and often eight, if the husband is rich or wants to appear so. As long as the festivities last, the bride and groom are in their respective huts, surrounded by people who are sweating from having eaten or drunk too much, in an atmosphere warmed by foul breaths, and where there is never any fresh air. They do not have a minute, not an instant, of peace, and they cannot even attend to [514] the wants of nature without being escorted by a numerous band. After each meal there is in their courts a deafening noise of drums, horns, and songs shouted by voices never in harmony, and their ears hear nothing but these sentences, which must be a torture to them in the long run: "May your marriage be happy, may hands and feet spring from it (may you have many children), may God preserve your /212/ health, may He grant you a long and vigorous old age. Thank you, thank you, you have received us well, you have not been sparing of the d'lo, I am full (nzé dé fara -- or again -- né fara dérén) (1)."

1. On the day of her wedding, a young woman talks only with the many women who have come to keep her company and with her maids of honor. When the time has come when she can talk, she is offered a hen.

765 Malakou, salakou
Fari ɔ, fari doun ka di." (2)

2. A song heard in Bani country. Since these songs are often improvised, they differ from one region to another.

Translation: "Ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans (fari) and to eat all one's fill, ah! how pleasant it is to eat mashed beans!"

The excised daughters and grandaughters of the deceased wear mourning for about eight to ten days. During this time they stay in the b'lon, or entry hut, and spin cotton. The only noteworthy fact [513, 514] is that they all sleep in the same hut and attend to the wants of nature at set times, going to the bush evening and morning in Indian file with white veils on their heads. For the whole moon following the [293] death, the wife (the wives if the old man was polygamous) of the deceased wear sandals of goatskin and go out dressed only in white.

.78 562 428 At the end of the moon, the wives of the deceased become the property of the head of the family, who makes them his own or gives them to his circumcised children (3). Some freedom is left to them,

3. Brothers succeed brothers. If there are no brothers, the oldest son inherits. If the deceased is younger than the brother who inherits, the latter possesses the wives but may not enjoy them. If the heir is the son of the deceased, all the father's or grandfather's wives belong to him, and he may enjoy them all except his mother.

for they can ransom themselves if they wish, and for the old and worn, difficulties are soon smoothed away. If the new family head is without a brother and without children or if he is older than the deceased,